

## Message Text

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51

ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 DODE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00

ARAE-00 SP-02 PRS-01 INR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00 RSC-01

/038 W

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P R 052159Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8778

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 5228

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: PRESENT SITUATION REGARDING POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT  
CHANGES

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4977, 5001 AND 5019

1. REFERENCED EMBASSY TELEGRAMS DESCRIBED MOVES BY DISSI-  
DENT MILITARY  
ELEMENTS TO BRING ABOUT CHANGES IN THE PRESENT  
REGIME. THE CHANGES INVOLVED SHIFTS WITHIN THE MILITARY,  
INCLUDING A REPLACEMENT OF THE CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES  
GENERAL STAFF (COL. JOSE DE LA CRUZ HERNANDEZ), TOGETHER  
WITH SEVERAL OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL STAFF AND SOME  
ZONE COMMANDERS. IN ADDITION, VARIOUS CABINET REPLACEMENTS  
WERE DESIRED AS WELL AS CHANGES IN CERTAIN GOVERNMENTAL  
POLICIES.

2. ACCORDING TO MISSION SOURCES THE GROUP REPRESENTING THE  
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MILITARY ACTIVISTS MET WITH CHIEF OF STATE LOPEZ ON

NOVEMBER 18, THE GROUP PRESENTED ITS VIEWS WHICH LOPEZ ACCEPTED, AND AGREED TO IMPLEMENT BY DECEMBER 1. HE ASKED THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENTS COME FROM HIS OFFICE, TO WHICH GROUP AGREED. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE DECEMBER 1 DATE WAS POSTPONED UNTIL DECEMBER 4.

3. LOPEZ HAS NOT AS OF DECEMBER 5 ANNOUNCED ANY CHANGES OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT HE WILL REPLACE THE PRESENTLY VACANT CABINET POSTS OF FOREIGN RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC WORKS IN JANUARY. IN EFFECT, THE DEMANDS OF THE ACTIVISTS AND LOPEZ' SUPPOSED ACQUIESCENCE HAVE NOT AS YET RESULTED IN ANY GOVERNMENTAL CHANGES. LOPEZ RECENTLY WENT TO MANAGUA TO ATTEND THE DECEMBER 1 INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT SOMOZA AND PLANS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY AGAIN TO ATTEND THE MEETING OF PRESIDENTS IN CARACAS ON DECEMBER 13-14, THEREBY PROJECTING A PUBLICLY CONFIDENT IMAGE.

4. THE FAILURE OF LOPEZ TO ANNOUNCE ANY CHANGES CAN PROBABLY BE ASCRIBED TO VARIOUS FACTORS. ONE OF THESE FACTORS IS THAT LOPEZ HAS BEEN IN A POSITION OF POWER IN HONDURAS SINCE 1957 AND HAS AN EXTENSIVE PATTERN OF RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, THUS GIVING HIM A CLEAR IDEA OF THE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE PRESENT DISSIDENCE. HE HAS UNDOUBTEDLY TAKEN STEPS TO STRENGTHEN HIS OWN BASE OF SUPPORT AND TO AMELIORATE, TO THE DEGREE POSSIBLE, DISCONTENT AMONG VARIOUS DISSIDENTS. FURTHERMORE, THE DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE EXHIBITED BY THE DISSIDENTS MAY WELL HAVE INHIBITED THEM FROM DEVELOPING POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION IN CASE LOPEZ DID NOT AGREE TO THEIR DEMANDS OR DID NOT DO WHAT HE PROMISED TO DO. ANOTHER FACTOR IS THAT LOPEZ IS A MASTER TACTICIAN IN PROCRASTINATION AND IN DIFFUSING AND NULLIFYING DISSENT.

5. THE MILITARY ACTIVISTS ARE ALSO INTENSELY CONCERNED ABOUT NOT CREATING A SITUATION IN WHICH AID FROM THE USG AND OTHER ENTITIES WOULD BE SLOWED OR STOPPED IF A COUP DEGENERATED INTO A SITUATION OF INTERNAL UPHEAVAL. FINALLY, THE ACTIVISTS REALIZE THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE A SINGLE LEADER WHOM EVERYONE COULD SUPPORT IF LOPEZ STEPS DOWN OR IS FORCED TO RESIGN. IN FACT, THE BASIC DESIRE ON THEIR

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PART IS PROBABLY NOT TO REMOVE LOPEZ BUT RATHER TO BRING ABOUT ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE.

6. THE LACK OF ACTION OF THE PART OF LOPEZ PROBABLY INDICATES THAT HE IS RELATIVELY CONFIDENT OF HIS ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE ACTIVISTS. CERTAINLY HE IS WELL AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THE DISSIDENTS DO NOT HAVE A CANDIDATE

TO REPLACE HIM IF HE STEPS DOWN OR IS REMOVED. HOWEVER,  
IT IS LIKELY THAT THE GROUP OF ACTIVISTS WILL  
REMAIN IN BEING, AND THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR  
SOME ASPECTS OF GOVERNMENTAL REORGANIZATION DURING THE  
COMING MONTHS.  
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